

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 1-45 and 94-180 without prejudice.

Please add the following new claims:

181. (New) A needle protective device comprising:

a) a needle guard slidably mounted on a needle having a proximal end and a sharpened distal end, said guard having a proximal end and a distal end, said guard containing a movable needle trap that is transitional between a first retracted configuration wherein said trap is oriented toward said proximal end of said needle, and a second operative configuration wherein said needle trap traps said sharpened distal end of said needle;

b) a limiting apparatus for limiting the distance said needle trap travels upon said needle from said first retracted and second operative configurations; and

c) a biasing apparatus for urging said needle trap of said hub towards said sharpened distal end of said needle.

182. (New) The device of Claim of 181 wherein said needle trap is integral to said guard.

183. (New) The device of Claim 181 further comprising:

a) a retaining apparatus for controllably

and releasably retaining said needle trap towards said proximal end of said needle such that said needle trap assumes said first retracted configuration.

184. (New) The device of Claim 183 further comprising:
a) a triggering apparatus for selectively releasing said retaining apparatus such that said needle trap extends distally to assume said operative configuration upon said needle.

185. (New) The device of Claim 183 wherein said retaining apparatus comprises a latching arm having a proximal end and a distal end, said proximal end of said latching arm being hingingly attached to said guard, said distal end of said latching arm comprising a protrusion.

186. (New) The device of Claim 185 wherein said guard further includes a recess for receiving and engaging said protrusion.

187. (New) The device of Claim 186 wherein said latching arm further comprises a finger pad for manually disengaging said latching arm from said guard.

188. (New) The device of Claim 181 wherein said guard includes an aperture extending axially therethrough such that in use, said guard is slidably mounted axially upon said needle.

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